

Management of Problems of Dyslexic Children through Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Aim of this study is to elaborate the role and benefits of Ayurveda in the society. Now days, Ayurveda is playing an important role both in physical and mental health. Ayurvedic therapy stresses the use of plant based medicines which are derived from roots, leaves, fruits, barks and seeds to treat or manage the health problems. Apart from other medications, Ayurvedic therapy is proving its beneficial role in mental problems.

Dyslexia is a reading disorder in which individual having problem in reading, writing, concentration etc. Through this research paper we are trying to manage problems of dyslexia in children through ayurvedic therapy which includes medicinal plants up to the extent and along with physical well being proving its position in mental well being too.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Ayurvedic Therapy, Dyslexia, Reading Disorder, Mental Well- Being.*

At the peak of scientific and technological advancement, the world is not able to reach the much sought for goal of progress yet, which is happiness. In the developing scenario, we see that everyone is facing problems in both physiological and psychological aspects due to personal, social, career situations occurring in their life. Everywhere, continuous development is going on and in this race individual's whole personality is getting affected in positive and negative form. In the society, development is continuously occurring in the fields of agriculture, technology, business, social work, clinical aspects etc. For money, luxurious life and completing several desires and demands in the life, they get lost in the crowd and get away from actual life, which results into various problems which are physical and psychological in nature. No family members have time to share their thoughts and feelings to children and others. Severe neurotic and psychotic disorders, increasing health hazards and stresses are found in the society nowadays. Crossing through such problems, not only middle aged person is suffering but also children are not untouched with this. They get badly affected by mental health problems and seek

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help from doctors, family and friends for proper concentration and relief of whole body and mind but do not get proper solution for its prevention.

Children are the future of the society and nation, help in the development in every field of the society. Childhood is the base of whole personality and develops society by crossing through different stages i.e. adolescent, middle and old age in both positive and negative aspects. According to UNICEF (1991), children are the future of the nation and the progress of the nation depends upon the development of their children.

Children mainly effected with emotional issues in the society that is in schools, family among friends and family members .Thus not able to share their drawbacks with others due to hesitation which results into health related problems that is physical and mental, low confidence, low self esteem, depression etc. If person is not mentally fit then it becomes difficult to cope up with personal and social situations as well as physically and mentally. Although there are various techniques present nowadays such as Psychotherapies, Counselling, Allopathic treatment, Ayurveda therapy, yoga therapy, home therapy, panchkarma etc. for proper cure of such problems. Now days, Ayurveda is playing an important role both in physical and mental health. Ayurvedic therapy stresses the use of plant based medicines which are derived from roots, leaves, fruits, barks and seeds to treat or manage the health problems. Apart from other medications, ayurvedic therapy is proving its beneficial role in mental problems.

AYURVEDA

The Vedic medical science- **Ayurveda** show us the silver line of hope in resolving the crisis. Ayurveda are scientific disciplines of Vedic knowledge revealed for the welfare of mankind and hence of every entity in Nature. It deals with the Vedic medical science of diagnostics, therapeutics and maintenance of total health.

Sanskrit term Ayurveda is composed of **ayu** which means 'life' and **veda** which means 'knowledge' or 'science'. It is the science of life, knowledge about life.

According to **Dr. Marc Halpern, (2005)** Ayurveda classifies herbs a stabilizing effect on the mind as 'medya rasayans' .These herbs promote the intellect and deeply nourish the neurological tissues.

Ayurveda had been prominent in the Indian society of the prehistoric times. In the teachings of **Yajurveda**, Ayurveda is described as a healing science; certain divine medicinal plants and qualities of Vaidya are also described. Ayurveda is described in **Samveda** with reference to the analysis of different herbal medicines and their therapeutic effects. In **Atharveda**, described in great detail, the diagnostics of Ayurveda are described as emphasis on identification and removal of the root-causes of the diseases as part of its holistic healing approach.

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Ayurveda essentially sees every disease as a psychosomatic manifestation. The continuous rising graph of psychoneurotic disorders and challenging diseases and the limitations of widely used modern medical sciences in coping with them and the harmful side-effects of antibiotics have regenerate new interest in this ancient science. Ayurveda deals with the preventive and remedial measures derived with several complexities and problems of human life and provide solutions. Therefore, it is most relevant and towards achieving total health in the present times as well. In *Shastric* scriptures it is defined as-

*Hitahitam Sukham Duhkhamayustasya Hitahitam |
Mananca Tacca Yatroktamayurvedah Sa Ucyate ||*

Meaning contains the details of healthy and long age and which defines what is good and what is bad for ayus i.e. hitayu, ahitayu, sukhayu and dukhayu, concerning different types of diseased or healthy life.

Ayurveda aims at the protection and maintenance of good health of the healthy people and elimination of and control over the ailments and health – disorders of the unhealthy. On the basis of diagnosis, it deals with characterization of natural constitution in terms of three basic functional elements called *tridosha* namely *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. The modern researches interpret *vata* as the energy of movement, *pitta* as the energy of digestion or metabolism and *kapha* as the energy of lubrication and structure. Proper balance of these three in the body is the sign of normal healthy state while any type of disturbance, excess or deficiencies in any these three results in different kinds of physiological and psychological diseases.

LEARNING DISORDER

Children with learning disability (LD), experience serious difficulties with learning even in the basic skills, such as reading, writing and doing math, despite having a normal intelligence. Behaviours exhibited by these children generally extend beyond the academic areas to socio-emotional areas too. Children with learning disability have a normal intelligence and are in the regular schools. **Kavale and Forness (2000)** estimated that 90% of all children identified as learning disabled are referred for special education services because of reading problems. They frequently display gifted creativity and genius. Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, Walt Disney is noted examples of persons with dyslexia. They manifest the following characteristics:

1. Cognitive characteristics

On psychological testing, these children may have an IQ of 85-90 and above. They are not mentally retarded, and are neither hearing impaired nor visually impaired.

2. Academic characteristics

In classroom performance, children with LD show a much poorer achievement in reading, writing and doing math compared to the class average.

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These children would manifest difficulties in one or more of the following areas:

- a. Only reading
- b. Reading and writing
- c. Only writing
- d. Doing arithmetic
- e. Thinking tasks
- f. Language comprehension and expression

3. Behavioural characteristics

Children with LD also manifest behaviours like:

- a. Hyperactivity, i.e. inability to sit at one place or work likes others.
- b. Difficulty in being attentive and learning when the teacher is teaching
- c. Clumsy in motor coordination, i.e. unable to do activities like cutting, pasting, folding, coloring with accuracy, missing the target while playing games like cricket, dodge ball, basket ball, etc. not very graceful while dancing.

4. Socio-emotional characteristics

- a. Children with LD have difficulty in initiating and maintaining relationships with their peers i.e. have difficulties making friends.
- b. Children with LD also have difficulty in establishing relations with teachers and other adults.
- c. Some children have mood swings and occasional emotional imbalance like excessive anger, depression, extreme frustration, aggression and very low self esteem.

LD includes-

Conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain damage, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, special language impairment not caused by a hearing impairment.

LD excludes-

Conditions such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, emotional disturbance and a cultural disadvantage.

LD thus manifests problem in listening, reasoning, perception, memory, selecting, and focusing attention on relevant information.

Reading disability is the most prominent or easily recognizes aspect of learning disability which exists across the three R's (Reading, Riting and Rithmetic).

Dyslexia

Reading disorder is a learning disorder which is commonly called as “**Dyslexia**” in which children having problem in reading, writing and mathematics which interferes the academic achievement of daily routine of them. Such children have problem in reading but they are very creative and skilled.

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Identified by Oswald Berkhan in 1881, the term 'dyslexia' was later coined in 1887 by Rudolf Berlin, an ophthalmologist practicing in Stuttgart, Germany, from the Greek word *dys* - hard, bad, difficult and *lexis*-speech, word.

According to **National Institute of Health, US** about 80% of people with learning disorder have reading disorder. 4% reading disorder is found in school age children. It can not only create problem to the children but also to the people related to them in school and in home. Common problems related to such children are-

- slow reading speed
- poor comprehension
- omission of words and spelling errors
- problem in writing and mathematical expression
- confusion with directions
- delay in spoken language
- difficulty in discrimination between close sounds/numbers like n or m, b or d, 6 or 9
- impaired hearing
- poor eyesight
- clumsiness

Other problems of dyslexic children are -

- low self-esteem
- low confidence
- stress
- depression
- emotional immaturity
- frustration
- conduct disorder
- ADHD
- Physical, mental and social problems etc.

According to Science Daily (2010) children with dyslexia often struggle with reading, writing, and spelling, despite getting an appropriate education and demonstrating intellectual ability in other areas. New neurological research has found that these children's difficulties with written language may be linked to structural differences within an important information highway in the brain known to play a role in oral language.

These are may be because of lack of opportunity; poor teaching, cultural factors, impaired vision or mental retardation .They cannot even live their life properly and become centre of attraction for others due to hesitation and loneliness. Even not able to discuss their problems freely in front of others and slowly their problem increases to high level.

PROBLEMS OF DYSLEXIC CHILDREN

- Dyslexic children may be physically and socially immature in comparison to their peers. This can lead to a poor self-image and less peer acceptance.
- Dyslexics' social immaturity may make them awkward in social situations.
- Many dyslexics have difficulty reading social cues. They may be oblivious to the amount of personal distance necessary in social interactions or insensitive to other people's body language.
- Dyslexia often affects oral language functioning. Affected persons may have trouble finding the right words, may stammer, or may pause before answering direct questions. This puts them at a disadvantage as they enter adolescence, when language becomes more central to their relationships with peers.

NCERT (2009), studies have shown that warm and positive parenting helps in the development of high self-esteem among children as it allows them to know that they are accepted as competent and worthwhile. Children, whose parents help or make decisions for them even when they do not need assistance, often suffer from low self esteem.

DYSLEXIA CAN BE MANAGED THROUGH AYURVEDIC THERAPY

Ayurvedic therapy mainly stresses the use of plants based medicines which are derived from roots, leaves, fruits, barks and seeds.

Brahmi, Shankhpushpi, Vacha are beneficial to manage the problems of dyslexic children.

Brahmi

Latin name: Bacopa Monnieri

Family: Scrophulariaceae

Common name: Brahmi, bacopa, Babies tear, Bacopa monnieri, Herpestis monniera, water hyssop

Part used: Whole plant

Bacopa monniera is bitter in taste; has been used in the Ayurvedic system of medicine for centuries. Brahmi which occurs naturally in India and has a long history of use in the Ayurvedic medicine tradition in the treatment of a number of disorders, particularly those involving anxiety, intellect and poor memory. It is a small, creeping herb with numerous branches. Flowers and fruit appear in summer and the entire plant is used medicinally.

Traditionally, it was used as a brain tonic to enhance memory development, learning, and concentration. **Shinomol, G.K.(2011)** current review deals with the component and application of such a traditional herb Brahmi that corresponds to two plant, Bacopa monneiri and Centella asiatica. Research evidences clearly indicate that both plants possess neuro protective properties, have neotropic activity with therapeutic implications for patients with memory loss.

Properties and action:

Rasa: tikta, kasaya, madhura

Guna: laghu, sara

Virya: sita

Vipaka: madhura

Karma: vata-har, kapha-har, rasayan, ayusya, medhya, swarya, prajasthan, vish-hara, moh-hara.

Medicinal Properties:

- Brahmi, *Bacopa monnieri* is one of the best rejuvenating and nervine tonic Ayurveda herb.
- Brahmi is valuable plant for brain and entire nervous system.
- Brahmi is used in epilepsy and mania.
- Brahmi helps in depression and mental retardation by enhancing intelligence.
- Brahmi is slightly astringent and hence useful in diarrhoea due to vitiated vata.
- Brahmi in small doses has cardio-tonic property.
- Brahmi used for cold and cough in children.
- Brahmi used in rheumatoid arthritis, the fresh juice of Brahmi is applied to the inflamed joints which help in relieving pain.
- Improves intellect, consciousness, and mental acuity
- Improves memory, mental clarity and longevity
- Decreases anxiety, restlessness, and senility
- Most commonly used to improve mental alertness, and enhance learning and academic performance
- Improves learning capacity
- Brahmi powder is a nervine tonic which calms down the mind. These characteristics make Brahmi very useful in loss of memory, schizophrenia and other psychic problems. **Prabhakar, S. (2009)** study showing Brahmi tonic for Alzheimer's not memory booster. Finding suggests the tonic can help to treat more serious memory –related disorders.
- Calms the mind and promotes relaxation - increases protein synthesis and activity in brain cells.

Shankpushpi

Common name: Shankpushpi

Sanskrit name: Mangalya kusuma

Latin name: *Covolvulus pluricaulis*

Part used: Whole plant

Shankpushpi; *Covolvulus pluricaulis* is an herb of choice as a brain tonic especially for the conditions of memory loss, schizophrenia, convulsions and intelligence related problems. The plant, Shankpushpi is often found in India and neighboring country Myanmar. The plant can be

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found in variety of places including sandy and rocky surfaces particularly in North India. This plant belongs to Convulvaceae family and usually flowers during September and October. The flowers can range between white to light pink in color.

Shankpushpi powder is used to improve the intellect qualities of children. Because of the presence of abundance of the gray matters in the intestines- Shankpushpi also regulates the functions of the digestive system. Shankpushpi powder is also an important Rasayana to be use in the mental disabilities. **Pragya,T.(2011)** study showed that Shankpushpi is beneficial for maintaining mental and physical health.

Medicinal Properties:

- Shankpushpi is one of the best Ayurveda herbs to nourish the brain tissues. In this way Shankpushpi benefits a lot in conditions of memory loss, schizophrenia, and convulsions.
- Shankpushpi is specially used to improve intellectual power of children.
- Shankpushpi is the best natural remedy for reduce stress level and sleeping disorders.
- Shankpushpi is a brain tonic, shamak, sedative and therefore it is used in epilepsy, insomnia and giddiness.
- Shankpushpi reduces the severity of attacks by its prabhav (shamak) in schizophrenia.
- Shankpushpi has peristaltic action which helps to eliminate intestinal toxins and constipation.
- Shankpushpi act as a diuretic due to sheeta veerya, therefore useful in dysuria and urinary tract infections.
- Shankpushpi is a good aphrodisiac, implantative due to snigdha, pichhil and madhur vipak.
- In defective sperm conditions, uterine debility, abortions and cervical incompetence, Shankpushpi is considered as a good medicine.
- Shankpushpi can cure many skin diseases because of its pittashamak and blood purifying actions.
- Shankpushpi is also used in syphilis.

Vach

Family Name: Araceae

Botanical Name: Acorus Calamus

Common Name: Calamus, Sweet Flag, Sweet Root, Bach

Part used: Root

Acorus calamus is commonly known as sweet flag in India. The leaves of Acorus calamus have a lemony scent as well as the roots have a sweet fragrance. Acorus calamus has long been known for its medicinal value, and has been cultivated in Asia for this reason. Its primary application is to open the mind, improve concentration, clarity and speech.

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Tripathi, A.K. (2010), study was done on animal models to evaluate the antidepressant action of plant drug vacha. Study proved that vacha definitely has antidepressant effects in animal model of depression but anxiolytic effect of vacha is not marked.

Pharmacological properties:

- GUNA (Quality): Laghu, Tiksha
- RASA (Taste): Katu, Tikt
- VIPAK (Metabolism): Katu
- VIRYA (Potency): Usha
- PRABHAV (Impact): Sagyasthapa

Medicinal properties:

1. Acorus calamus depresses central nervous system, and a well known ingredient in formulation for psycho-somatic disorders like epilepsy.
2. Acorus calamus is slightly tonic but forms a useful adjunct to other tonics and stimulants
3. Acorus calamus is very popular for the remedies of cough and cold and also the other respiratory disorders like bronchitis. In raw form it is also used as cough lozenge.
4. Acorus calamus provides aid to the digestive system and acts against flatulent colic, Dyspepsia, and vomiting.
5. The vapours of Acorus calamus from the roots do repel some insects. **Daniel, M. (2008)**, vacha improves memory loss and intellect, and is also used to treat mental disorders.

CONCLUSION

Many scientific researches are done recently on Ayurveda. Unique features of Ayurveda i.e. Healthy life through the use of herbs provides physical, mental and emotional well-being that makes this ancient Indian science a suitable one, in the present scenario.

Karande, Sunil (2013), ayurvedic drugs may have an important role in improving attention and memory in dyslexic children, thereby enabling their learning potential. Health is an important issue for an individual to live a proper life. Mental health plays an important role for proper survival for all ages i.e. childhood, adult and older ones. Dyslexia like problem in children can also be easily treated through ayurvedic herbs up to some extent.

Herbs can be useful to improve intellectual power, improves concentration, learning capacity and enhance academic performance too in a proper manner. Many researchers have proved this too and further researches are going on. Approach of Ayurveda is so different as compared to today's medical science where healthcare management, treatment of patients has become a profession and methods of diagnostics, treatment and the medicines are becoming more and more expensive day by day, a source of making huge money. This ancient science of medicine unfolds the secrets of youthful longevity and is therefore also referred as a comprehensive

science of happy life. Healthy and peaceful state of the mind-body system is the major focus of Ayurveda having multiple dimensions of well-being- including duty, progressing and fulfilling life in physiological, emotional and psychological aspects. As a whole it is a total science of life in the soul's worldly existence and expansion.

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